

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS
MEETING OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024, 9:00 AM TO NOON
VIRTUAL, VIA ZOOM**

Present: John Graham (Chairperson), Josh Watt, Vivi Dabee, Shawna Joynt, Laurel Repski, Kris Cowley, Ray Schirle, Two ASL Interpreters (ECCOE), Emily Walker, and Colleen Watters (Manitoba Accessibility Office).

Regrets: Scott Jocelyn

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and made the land acknowledgement. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the draft recommendations from the Accessible Employment Standard Review. The secretary provided a PowerPoint of the draft recommendations, following which Council discussed them to reach a consensus.

Action: The chair and secretary will develop a draft report for Council to review prior to the next meeting on January 9, 2025.

- Report due to the Minister January 17, 2025.

A Council member reported that the interpreter program at Red River College Polytechnic has been paused at least until 2026. Many stakeholders (including members of the Deaf community) have written letters to Minister Nahanni Fontaine and to the Minister of Advanced Education, and a number of people signed a petition requesting the program be restored. Following discussion, Council agreed to:

Action: On behalf of Council, the chair will write a letter to Minister Fontaine. The chair will raise concerns that the program is on pause and recommend that it should continue.

By way of MAO updates, the secretary reported that the application period for Manitoba Accessibility Fund grants will begin on January 6 and close February 14, 2025. A series of webinars about MAF will take place in January. The Manitoba Accessibility Office is holding webinars on accessibility planning for municipalities, as well as the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. The chair and secretary will meet with the Rick Hansen Foundation in January to acquaint representatives with the work of the Council and the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

The next meeting will be January 9, 2025. A potential meeting with the minister will be planned for February 2025.

Action: The chair and secretary will develop a draft meeting schedule for 2025 aiming for the second Thursday of each month where possible. Council members were asked to let the secretary know if they have conflicts with the suggested dates.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.